Subject: Re: Chat with BushwickBK.com
From: Barrett Brown <barriticus@gmail.com>
Date: 7/4/09, 12:07 PM
To: "BushwickBK.com" <jeremy.sapienza@gmail.com>

Howdy-

Let me know what you think of this for the first column:

Notes from the Outside World

Last week brought a goofy meta-conflict over the media's handling of the equally goofy Mike Sanford scandal, the one in which the South Carolina governor disappeared for a few days before confirming that he'd been carrying on an affair with some Argentinian chick. When a South Carolina newspaper published an e-mail exchange between the two lovers, some wondered aloud whether there was any real news value in doing so. And when Keith Olbermann and Rachel Maddow each dedicated parts of their MSNBC programs to ridiculing those e-mails, others objected; Olbermann in particular was taken to task by several Daily Kos diarists for resorting to tactics allegedly comparable to those of Rush Limbaugh. Olbermann, himself a Daily Kos diarist, responded that those who attack him from the site should be careful, as they "may be part of a plan to make it look like I'm under siege by the Left." It must be remembered that Keith Olbermann is kind of a douchebag.

The e-mails in question do have news value; the story concerns how our nation routinely provides power and influence to low-rent yokels who can't write a proper letter. Sanford, for instance, possesses several of the more irritating habits common to business majors who take it upon themselves to write anything more complex than a signature. Like his Argentinian girlfriend, who may be excused from prose criticism insomuch as that English is not her first language, he often merges two words into one, promising at one point to write a more "indepth" note at a later time. He garbles common phrases in the manner of someone who has rarely seen them in print, describing an upcoming family jaunt through Asia as a "world wind tour." He is also adrift in presenting itemized information. "Three thoughts in one note now that I have a moment. One the travel schedule is about to get real busy (and this distresses me for the way it may well make it more difficult to get your notes over the next few weeks), two unfortunately all the feelings you describe are mutual, and three where do we go from here?" This is immediately followed by three long paragraphs in which thoughts one, two, and three are addressed with further violence to English grammar: "Three and finally, while all the things above are all too true — at the same time we are in a hopelessly — or as you put it impossible — or how about combine and simply say hopelessly impossible situation of love."

All in all, Sanford's prose isn't that much worse than that of the average middle-aged male who presumably owns a copy of *The Purpose-Driven Life* while presumably not owning many real books. Perhaps more alarming is the mediocre level of cognitive development on display here, totally apart from writing ability; it must be remembered that Sanford has been spoken of as a potential presidential contender since at least 2006, which is to say he had a shot at the most crucial public office in history. Yet here he is carrying on like the most insufferable of self-indulgent teenagers: "To me, and I suspect no one else on earth, there is something wonderful about listening to country music playing in the cab, air conditioner running, the hum of a huge diesel engine in the background, the tranquility that comes with being in a virtual wilderness of trees and marsh, the day breaking and vibrant pink coming alive in the morning clouds — and getting to build something with each scoop of dirt." Yeah, you're a unique little fucking snowflake because you like working outdoors and air conditioning.

Notes from Bushwick

The guy who smokes crack on my doorstep was arrested last week; a van filled with undercovers drove by and took him away. It's a shame, I suppose, but then the fellow lacked etiquette.

I actually hadn't seen him for a while. The basement apartment at the other end of the block which served as the neighborhood crack house was finally sealed shut by the landlord at some point last year, forcing the squatters therein to move on, so Doorstep Crack Smoker rarely had occasion to come around anymore, and neither did the other crack aficionados who used to be a common fixture of the neighborhood. But Doorstep Crack Smoker was the only one of them who smoked crack on my doorstep. He chose mine because of its strategic location between the wall of the adjacent car lot and the other little wall making up one side of the trash can thingamajig; sitting on my doorstep, one is largely out of view and thus free to enjoy one's rock in relative safety. If Zagat's catered to crackheads in need of a place to smoke, my doorstep would get four stars.

My roommates would generally make him leave if they ever encountered him (thus not five stars), but I generally ignored him insomuch as that it's not my job to hassle crackheads. My only real problem with him was that he smoked his crack out of those little mini-Pepsi cans and would invariably leave the can on the steps when he was done. I even told him one time, "Hey, when you're done, put it in la basura." He nodded, but yet again left his soda can right there in front of my door. Sometimes I would come home and there would be several of the damned things. The trash can is literally a foot away from my doorstep.

It was also somewhat irritating that he never seemed to recognize me. I would see him in the street and he would come up to me and say, "Excuse me, papi, do you speak English?" I have blue eyes and red hair. Yes, I speak English. What would I speak, fucking Gaelic? There aren't any Europeans in this neighborhood. Anyway, he would ask me for change, and I

would explain to him that he's already asked me for change before with no success and that he smokes crack on my doorstep and leaves coke cans there and that we'd just seen each other yesterday. It just didn't make any sense that the guy wouldn't remember me. The drugs don't explain it; the older black crackhead lady who hangs around on Broadway doesn't have any problem recognizing me and asking me for a kiss on the cheek or a quarter. The alcoholic guy with cancer who's trained his dogs to pull him in a makeshift wheelchair in preparation for his decline in mobility had no problem recognizing me the other day and I hadn't seen him in three months. But Doorstep Crack Smoker couldn't recognize me to save his life.

His whole begging scheme is bizarre. He asks everyone if they speak English - white, black, Hispanic. The Queen of England could show up on Flushing Avenue and he'd ask her if she speaks English. But it doesn't seem to matter whether you speak English or not; a friend of mine who's of Mexican descent had the following exchange with him:

"Excuse me, papi, do you speak English?"

"Yeah."

"Well, I'm going to speak to you in Spanish out of respect."

"Uh..."

"Por favor, necessito-"

"No."

I guess I'll miss him.

On Mon, Jun 22, 2009 at 10:09 PM, BushwickBK.com <jeremy.sapienza@gmail.com> wrote:

> 10:09 PM **me**: sup g
> **BushwickBK.com**: was thinking of something
> would you be into/able to do liek a weekly column
> just about random shit
> **me**: sure
> any specifications beyond random?
> **BushwickBK.com**: you'd be perfect for it
> 10:10 PM well, obv as locally relevant as possible
> but don't want to make it too restrictive
> **me**: right
> how long, abouts?
> **BushwickBK.com**: oh I dunno
> it could be pretty rambly if you felt liek it

10:11 PM you just have the sort of attitude and style that's perfect for a column
me: right, thanks
how much would you be willing to pay per column?
BushwickBK.com: we could start at $30?
me: That'll work
BushwickBK.com: cewl
10:12 PM trying to make more damn money with this thing
so I can pay more peopel to do more shit
me: okay, I'll get the first one to you later this week
BushwickBK.com: wow, cool
yeah, send me soemthing and then we'll talk about a name and hwo to present it and stuff
10:13 PM **me**: I;ll give it some thought and e-mail you tomorrow
BushwickBK.com: great!